

From: Alice A Miano
Sent: Tuesday, July 2, 2024 5:08 PM
To: Nicolle Burnham <NBurnham@losgatosca.gov>
Cc: Jeffrey Suzuki
Subject: Draft of proposed letter to Council

[EXTERNAL SENDER]

Dear Mayor Badame, Vice Mayor Hudes, and Councilmembers Moore, Rennie, and Ristow:

I write to you in my capacity as Chair of the Los Gatos Complete Streets and Transportation Commission (CSTC). At our last meeting on June 13, 2024, all members present—myself, Vice Chair Suzuki, and Commissioners Elhers, Miller, and Thompson—voted in favor of advising the Town Council to publicly endorse the acquisition by the Valley Transit Authority (VTA) of the local Union Pacific line. (Only one member was absent from the meeting, Youth Commissioner Rashil Sharma.) Our hope is that this purchase would accelerate plans to bring the Light Rail to Vasona Station in Los Gatos and ultimately connect us to other West Valley cities such as Cupertino and Saratoga, along with Campbell and other Santa Clara County cities.

As we discussed this item at our meeting, Commissioner Miller said he agreed “heartily” with the endorsement and would like to see the Town encourage VTA to acquire the Union Pacific line all the way to its endpoint at the Permanente Quarry. Vice Chair Suzuki likewise commented that there appears to be support for such an acquisition within VTA, and that if the Town publicly endorsed such a proposal, we could actually see it come to fruition. I noted that [a 2019 article in the San José Spotlight](#), “VTA committee puts Vasona extension on ice...,” reported that the VTA Board voted down as too expensive a proposal to extend the light rail to Vasona Station, adding that the VTA Board Chair at that time, Sam Licardo, is now running to represent us in Congress. As such, making known our desire for vastly improved public transportation seems even more imperative.

If we want to have any chance of saving the West Valley from worsening gridlock, we need to plan well in advance. I commented that construction costs only go up: the longer we wait, the bigger the price tag. Commissioner Miller, however, noted that at least the cost of acquiring the line now may be cheaper: because the Permanente Quarry has shut down, Union Pacific is said to be interested in selling the line, and governmental entities would be entitled to purchase. As noted above, the vote to request that Council publicly endorse VTA’s acquisition of the Union Pacific line was unanimous. We hope that the Town Council will agree and seize this opportunity to accelerate the possibility of bringing the light rail to Los Gatos.

Sincerely,
Alice A. Miano
Chair, Complete Streets & Transportation Commission

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